REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for recording the terminal disclaimer filed on June 29, 2005.

Claims 15-16, 26-27, 31-34 and 36-37 are pending in the present application. In the non-final Office Action of July 25, 2005, claims 31-34 and 36 were allowed and claims 15-16, 26-27 and 37 were rejected. Applicant hereby cancels claims 15 and 26, amends claims 16, 27 and 37, and traverses the rejections as follows.

Response to Claim Objections

The Examiner has objected to the drawings for the reasons indicated in the Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review, Form PTO-948, attached to the Office Action. With this Response and Amendment, Applicant has submitted corrected formal drawings to address the objections set forth in the Notice.

Response to Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 15-16, 26-27 and 37 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kontra (US 2,565,659) in view of Winchester (US 3,380,267). Applicant has canceled claims 15 and 26 rendering the rejection of those claims moot. Applicant has amended claim 16 to expressly include the limitations of canceled claim 15, from which claim 16 depended, thereby placing claim 16 into independent form. Applicant has amended claim 27 to expressly include the limitations of canceled claim 26, from which claim 27 depended, thereby placing claim 27 into independent form. Applicant also has amended claim 37 to expressly include the limitations of canceled claim 15, from which claim 37 depended, thereby placing claim 37 into independent form. Applicant respectfully submits that none of these amendments is a narrowing amendment.

A finding of obviousness under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) requires that all claim limitations of the Applicant's invention must be taught or suggested by the prior art. MPEP § 2143.03. Applicant respectfully submits that Kontra and Winchester, taken alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest all of the elements of Applicant's claims 16, 27 and 37.

Claim 16 is directed to a method of preventing disconnection of a coupling using a device having (i) first and second halves that are mateable to form an opening, the first and second halves each having an inner surface, (ii) a plurality of holes defined in the first and second halves, the plurality of holes including at least one socket hole, wherein the socket hole has a length comprising a first diameter portion and a second diameter portion, the socket hole is enclosed along the first diameter portion and the second diameter portion, the first diameter is less than the second diameter, and the socket hole is defined in one of the first and second halves such that the first diameter portion is proximate the inner surface of said one of said first and second halves, (iii) at least one threaded hole defined in the other of the first and second halves, and (iv) at least one threaded fastener. The method includes the steps of (a) fitting the first and second halves directly over the coupling, such that the coupling is disposed in the opening; (b) aligning the socket hole with the threaded hole; and (c) inserting the threaded fastener into the socket hole and threadedly engaging the threaded fastener with the threaded hole. Claim 16 further recites that the coupling is an odometer cable coupling and that the "*at least one threaded fastener is threadedly engaged with said threaded hole using a thin-wall deep socket.*" (Emphasis added.)

Kontra and Winchester do not disclose or teach all of the recited steps of claim 16. At the very least, they fail to disclose or teach threadedly engaging a threaded fastener with a threaded hole using a thin-wall deep socket, as recited in claim 16. Kontra discloses a speedometer cable fitting lock with a threaded fastener in the form of a screw plug (24) that threadedly engages a threaded hole (20). Kontra, however, does not disclose or teach using a thin-wall deep socket to engage the threaded fastener into the hole. To the contrary, the threaded fastener of Kontra is engaged into the hole using a key (30). Winchester discloses a device for sealing the coupling of a speedometer-odometer cable. Winchester does not disclose or teach using a thin-wall deep socket to engage a threaded fastener into a hole in the device. Instead, Winchester discloses unthreaded latching projections (15) that engage a rectangular hole (14) to hold the housing (6) in a closed position. Thus, even if one combines the teachings of Kontra and Winchester, as the Examiner proposes, that combination does not teach the use of a thin-wall deep socket.

Applicant respectfully submits, therefore, that Kontra and Winchester do not render claim 16 unpatentable.

Claim 27 is directed to a method of preventing disconnection of an odometer cable coupling. The method includes (a) providing an odometer cable coupling; (b) providing a device having first and second sections that are mateable to form an opening, the first and second sections each having an inner surface and a plurality of holes, the plurality of holes including (i) at least one socket hole, wherein the socket hole has length comprising a first diameter portion and a second diameter portion, the socket hole is enclosed along the first diameter portion and the second diameter portion, the first diameter is less than the second diameter, and the socket hole is defined in one of the first and second sections such that the first diameter portion is proximate the inner surface of the one of the first and second sections, (ii) at least one threaded hole defined in the other of the first and second sections, and (iii) at least one threaded fastener; (c) fitting said first and second sections directly over said coupling, such that said coupling is disposed in said opening; (d) aligning said socket hole with said threaded hole; and (e) inserting said threaded fastener into said socket hole and threadedly engaging said threaded fastener with said threaded hole. Claim 27 also recites that the *"at least one threaded fastener is threadedly engaged with said threaded hole using a thin-wall deep socket."* (Emphasis added.)

Kontra and Winchester do not disclose or teach all of the recited steps of claim 27. At the very least, for the reasons discussed above, they fail to disclose or teach a threaded fastener that is threadedly engaged with a threaded hole using a thin-wall deep socket, as recited in claim 27. Applicant respectfully submits, therefore, that Kontra and Winchester do not render claim 27 unpatentable.

Claim 37 is directed to a method of preventing disconnection of a coupling using a device having (i) first and second halves that are mateable to form an opening, the first and second halves each having an inner surface, (ii) a plurality of holes defined in the first and second halves, the plurality of holes including at least one socket hole, wherein the socket hole has a length comprising a first diameter portion and a second diameter portion, the socket hole is enclosed along the first diameter portion and the second diameter portion, the first diameter is less than the second diameter, and the socket hole is defined in one of the first and second halves

such that the first diameter portion is proximate the inner surface of said one of said first and second halves, (iii) at least one threaded hole defined in the other of the first and second halves, and (iv) at least one threaded fastener. The method includes the steps of (a) fitting the first and second halves directly over the coupling, such that the coupling is disposed in the opening; (b) aligning the socket hole with the threaded hole; and (c) inserting the threaded fastener into the socket hole and threadedly engaging the threaded fastener with the threaded hole. Claim 37 further recites that the socket hole has an opening proximate the second diameter portion, the threaded fastener defines a head, and "*the step of inserting said threaded fastener comprises inserting said threaded fastener such that said head does not protrude through said opening.*" (Emphasis added.)

Kontra and Winchester, either alone or in combination, do not disclose or teach all of the recited steps of claim 37. At the very least, they fail to disclose or teach the step of inserting a threaded fastener such that the head of the fastener does not protrude through the socket hole opening, as recited in 37. To the contrary, Winchester does not disclose a threaded fastener and Kontra shows a threaded fastener with a head (26) protruding out of the bore opening (23) when the threaded fastener is inserted (see FIG. 3). Applicants respectfully submit, therefore, that Kontra and Winchester do not render claim 37 unpatentable.

Conclusion

Applicant respectfully submits that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore requests that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections, that they be withdrawn and that the claims be allowed. It is believed that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner

believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fee required or to deposit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 503289.

Dated: January 23, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

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I hereby certify that this paper and all documents and any fee referred to herein are being deposited on the date indicated above with the U.S. Postal Service "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" service under 37 C.F.R. § 1.10, postage prepaid and addressed to the Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

Louis A. Lofredo, Paralegal

1-23-06
Date of Signature